

THE

# STATE OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH



2008-2009



HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION  
OF DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS, INC.



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2008-2009

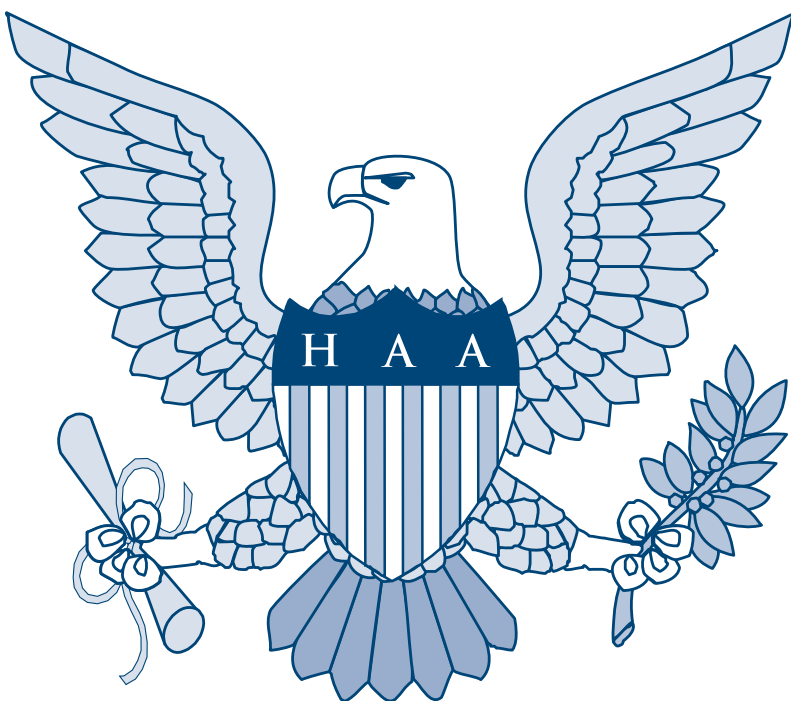


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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The *State of Our Nation's Youth* is an annual effort to give voice to the issues, opinions and thoughts of our nation's young people. In the undertaking of this important task, the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is honored to have partners who share with the Association a dedication to focusing the attention of our country on the opinions, concerns, hopes and dreams of America's young people.

The Association is grateful to its Executive Committee, Board of Directors and all the membership of the Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans for their committed support of this effort. The Association would also like to express its gratitude to Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., authors of this report.



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# INTRODUCTION

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The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans Inc. is proud to present the results of the 2008-2009 *State of Our Nation's Youth* survey. Since 1996 the Association has conducted a survey of young people between the ages of 13 and 19 to ascertain the issues and feelings of American youth. The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans is pleased to present the findings of the survey to educators and the community at large.

In 1947 Dr. Norman Vincent Peele and Dr. Kenneth Beebe founded the Horatio Alger Association to recognize and celebrate Americans who overcome adversity to achieve success through hard work and persistence. The Association continues that great work by presenting the Horatio Alger Award each year to Americans who have risen from humble beginnings to achieve success through our nation's free enterprise system and serve as role models to young people across the country. Through the generosity of the Association's membership, the Horatio Alger Association awards over \$12 million annually in need-based college scholarships nationally to high school seniors. These students, like the membership of the Horatio Alger Association, have overcome some of life's most difficult challenges.

The *State of Our Nation's Youth* report was created by the Association to give voice and attention to the opinions, concerns, thoughts and aspirations of the young people of the United States. The report offers valuable insight into the lives of teens across the country and what effect our nation's government, culture and their own relationships have on their lives. The Association is pleased to work with the firm of Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., in conducting this year's back-to-school survey. With their assistance, the 2008-2009 *State of Our Nation's Youth* report incorporates responses from youth balanced to reflect the gender, geographic, ethnic and socio-economic make up of the United States.

America's young people reveal in this report the excitement and expectations with which they approach their adulthood. The survey findings, while overall positive, present issues that will be of concern to parents, educators and members of the community and may provide a starting point for conversations between teens and the adults in their lives. The greater understanding of the lives of our nation's young people, the more poised the nation can be to support America's most valuable resource, its young people.

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## OVERVIEW

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**I**n their own words, the *State Of Our Nation's Youth* is confident, ambitious, and optimistic.

The generation of high school students reflected in this year's survey face many challenges. These teenagers are worried about the country's future and apprehensive about the economy and the war in Iraq. They face ever-increasing pressure about their grades and getting into college. There is growing evidence that adult problems, such as financial worries and health care concerns, are creeping into their lives.

Yet despite these anxieties, what emerges here is a portrait of a generation who believe in themselves and their abilities. Their pessimism about the country's future is matched by optimism for their own futures. The pressures they feel about grades and college are matched by their ambition. Their role models—most often a member of their own family—give them the confidence to combat any challenges they face on the road to adulthood.

Two other trends emerge from this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey, both related to the influence of technology in today's world. First, students are the first to recognize the importance of technology. Asked to pick from a list of possible improvements to their school, students say that more up-to-date technology would make the biggest difference. They also believe that their science and technology classes are the most important to take when it comes to preparing them to succeed in the global economy.

Second, the impact of the Internet on students' lives—academic, social, and leisure—is nearly impossible to overstate. It affects them in positive ways, such as by providing homework help and a chance to stay in touch with friends, and also in negative ways, such as providing distractions from homework and creating outlets for a new kinds of bullying and anti-social behavior.

### Outlook

High school students in this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey are much more downbeat about the country than students have been in past years. As recently as 2003, 75% of teenagers said they felt hopeful and optimistic about the future of the country. This year, however, barely half

(53%) of students feel hopeful and optimistic about the future of the country—a 22-point decline in five years. When asked which one or two issues would be most important to them if they were to vote in the presidential election, students’ biggest concerns are the economy and jobs (34%) and the war in Iraq (31%).

Looking forward to the fall presidential election, three-quarters (75%) of students say the election’s outcome will make a large difference in the direction of the country and important issues, including 41% who say it will make a very large difference. Yet despite feeling as though its outcome will have important consequences, just about one in ten (12%) students is following news about the campaigns for this year’s presidential election very closely.

## **The Internet**

This year’s survey reveals that students are using the Internet more for entertainment and social networking than for help with homework. Among all students, the average number of hours spent online for help with homework is 4.5 per week. Students spend nearly 6.2 additional hours each week using the Internet to browse social networking sites and 7.1 hours using the Internet for entertainment. Putting those together, students spend 13.3 hours online each week keeping up with friends and entertaining themselves and just 4.5 hours each week online for homework.

For all the time they spend on the Internet, barely half (46%) of teens report that their parents have rules governing how they use the Internet. An even lower proportion report having parental rules about how much time they can spend online (38%). Despite this seeming lack of parental oversight, three in four (72%) teens say that their parents know a great deal or fair amount about the types of things they are doing online.

Although more than half (54%) of teens say bullying that happens at school, such as name calling in the hallways or people writing mean things on bathroom walls remains a bigger problem, a remarkable proportion (30%) of students now are more concerned about bullying that happens online, such as on a Facebook page or instant messenger. In fact, 16% of teenagers have personal experience with online bullying and say that someone has posted something mean or hurtful about them online.

## Schools

This year, students assign grades to their schools that translate to a 2.7 grade point average. In 2001, schools also received a 2.7 grade point average. Indeed, since 2001, America's high school students' grades for their schools have deviated by only 0.2 in grade point average.

When asked which one or two of several possible improvements would make the biggest impact on the quality of their education, more up-to-date technology (38%) is at the top of the list. The subjects students say will be most important in preparing them to succeed in the types of jobs they see themselves doing in the global economy echo the importance students place on science and technology in their schools. One in three (34%) students says it is most important to pay attention in science and technology classes. Students also place a premium on the value of math classes, with 26% naming math as the most important subject they will take in school.

One in three (33%) teens is very involved at school; 46% say they are somewhat involved. Twelve percent (12%) of students describe themselves as not that involved and just 9% say they are not involved at all. Athletics are the most common activity to be involved with at school. Overall, 64% of teenagers report spending some time each week playing or practicing a sport for an average of 10.3 hours each week. Although 61% of students are involved in an extracurricular activity other than athletics, students spend only an average of 7.6 hours per week on these pursuits.

## Grades And Homework

This year, nearly four in five (79%) high school students say that pressure to get good grades creates a problem for them. This includes 45% of students who say the pressure creates major problems for them. Although the pressure that students feel over their grades has increased since 2001, the grades they report receiving have remained largely consistent, with some modest improvement. In 2001, 61% of teenagers reported getting mostly B's or better on their report card. In 2004, the proportion was 70%, and this year 67% of students say their report cards show mostly B's or better.

Given the increased pressure students feel over their grades, it is not surprising that this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* report finds students spending significantly more time on their homework than in years past. One in five (21%) students dedicates more than 10 hours each week to

homework. In 2005, just 12% of students reported spending as much time on their homework, a proportion that had been largely stable since 2001.

## College And Careers

Seventy percent (70%) of today's high school students plan to attend a four-year college or university sometime after completing high school. Nearly one in four (23%) students plans to pursue some other type of training after high school, with 10% saying they are planning for a two-year college, 7% for a community college, and 6% for a vocational or technical school. Just 4% of teenagers have no plans for continuing their education after high school.

It is a good thing so many of today's students are planning for higher education—nearly all their top choices for future careers require several years of college or professional schooling. When thinking ahead to the kind of job they hope to have in 20 years, the top choice among students in an open-ended question is doctor or surgeon (10%), followed closely by a teacher or professor (8%), engineer (6%), nurse/medical assistant (6%), arts or entertainment (5%), or lawyer or attorney (5%).

When asked directly about several possible career tracks, half (49%) of students say they have thought about becoming a teacher, 42% have thought about joining the military, 33% have thought about serving in government, and 20% have thought about running for public office.

## Pressure And Positive Influence

This year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey finds a significant fraction of students who say they feel too much pressure to act as an adult. Overall, 59% of high school students say they are free to act their age and just be teenagers. However, nearly two in five (37%) students say they feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to just be teenagers.

Indeed, grades are hardly the only pressure that causes problems for students. To lesser degrees, students cite several other pressures as problems. Overall, 63% of students in this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey fall into the "under control" category. These students may have one or two pressures that create problems in their lives, but for the most part, they feel comfortable with the pressures they face. On the other side, however, 37% of students fall into the "under pressure" category.

These students say that multiple pressures—economic, family-related, concerns about fitting in—create problems for them.

The good news is that again this year, a majority (57%) of students report having a family member who serves as their role model. This year’s survey findings also indicate that religion has a positive influence on many students’ lives. Just over half (53%) of students say they consider themselves religious people.

Despite their big-picture pessimism and specific problems, students are overwhelmingly confident in themselves and their futures. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teenagers say they would use the word “confident” to describe themselves. More than nine in ten (93%) teens say they are very or fairly confident that they will reach their career goals. Sixty-six percent (66%) of students consider themselves optimists. Finally, 81% of students say they would use the word “ambitious” to describe themselves.

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## QUICK FACTS

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### 1. Outlook

- ♦ Just **half (53%)** of students say they are optimistic about the future of the country—down 22 points in five years.
- ♦ **Three-quarters (75%)** of students say the outcome of this fall’s presidential election will make a large difference in the direction of the country.
- ♦ **Only about one in ten (12%)** students is following news about the campaigns for this year’s presidential election very or fairly closely.

### 2. The Internet

- ♦ Students spend an average of **13.3 hours** online each week keeping up with friends and entertaining themselves, and just **4.5 hours** each week online for homework.
- ♦ **Half (46%)** of teens report that their parents have rules for how they use the Internet; **72%** of students say their parents know a great deal or fair amount about how they spend their time online.
- ♦ **Three in ten (30%)** students say online bullying is now a bigger problem than bullying that happens in school hallways and bathrooms; **16%** of students say they have been a victim of online bullying.

### 3. Schools

- ♦ Students assign grades to their schools that translate to a **2.7 grade point average**—the same rating they gave their schools in 2001.
- ♦ On a list of possible improvements to their schools, students **(38%)** say more up-to-date technology would have the biggest impact.
- ♦ Students believe science and technology classes **(34%)** are the most important to take when it comes to succeeding in the global economy.
- ♦ **Two-thirds (64%)** of teenagers report spending time each week playing or practicing a sport for an average of **10.3 hours per week**.

- ♦ **Three in five (61%)** teens are involved in some other type of extracurricular activity and spend an average of **7.6 hours per week** on these pursuits.

## 4. Grades And Homework

- ♦ **Four in five (79%)** high school students say that pressure to get good grades creates a problem for them; **45%** say it creates major problems.
- ♦ The grades students report receiving on their report cards have been stable since 2001, and this year **67%** of students say they get mostly B's or better.
- ♦ **One in five students (21%)** spends more than 10 hours each week on their homework; overall students spend an average of 8.2 hours each week on homework.

## 5. Colleges And Careers

- ♦ **Seventy percent (70%)** of today's high school students plan to attend a four-year college or university.
- ♦ **Half (49%)** of students have thought about becoming a teacher, **42%** have thought about joining the military, **33%** have thought about serving in government, and **20%** have thought about running for public office.

## 6. Pressures And Positive Influence

- ♦ **Nearly two in five (37%)** students say they feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to just be teens.
- ♦ **Thirty-seven percent (37%)** of teens are "under pressure," meaning multiple pressures create problems for these students.
- ♦ **A majority (57%)** of students report having a family member who serves as their role model.
- ♦ **Eighty-eight percent (88%)** of students use the word "confident" to describe themselves.



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# FINDINGS

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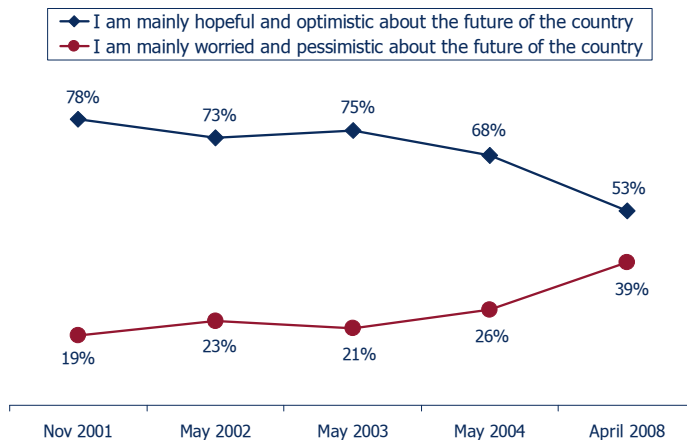
## I. OUTLOOK

### Fewer Students Are Optimistic About Country's Future

High school students in this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey are more downbeat about the country than students have been in past years. As recently as 2003, 75% of teenagers said they felt hopeful and optimistic about the future of the country. In 2004, the proportion of students who felt optimistic dipped slightly to 68%. This year, however, barely half (53%) of students feel hopeful and optimistic about the future of the country—a 22-point decline in five years. Nearly two in five (39%) students say they are worried and pessimistic about the country's future.

The news here could be worse. In a recent NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll, 71% of adults said the country is off on the wrong track and just 16% said the country is heading in the right direction.

### Students' Outlook For The Future



Pessimism is more evident among African-American (47%) and Hispanic (43%) teens than among Caucasians (36%). Teenagers who report having above-average family incomes (61%) and say they receive mostly A's on their report cards (59%) are more hopeful and optimistic than are those who do not relate to those characteristics. In general, students who feel under

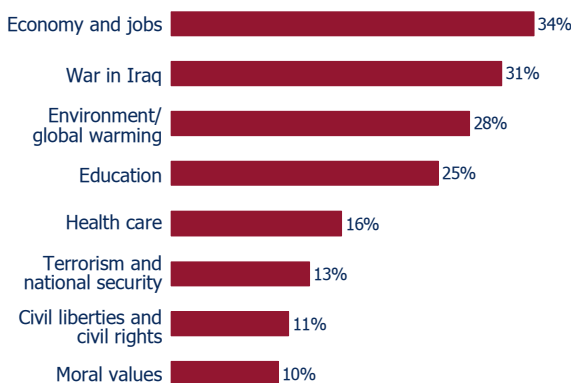
pressure (46%)—whether the pressure is related to grades, economics, or traditional teenage frustrations—are much more likely to adopt a pessimistic attitude about the country’s future than are students who feel that they have the pressures they face under control (35%).

## The Economy, Jobs, And The War In Iraq Are Students’ Most Important Issues

Students’ priorities for the next president cast some light on their unease. When asked which one or two issues would be most important to them if they were to vote in the presidential election, the concerns teenagers express largely echo those expressed by their parents. Students’ biggest concerns are the economy and jobs (34%) and the war in Iraq (31%). In an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll among registered voters, taken at the same time, 43% said their first or second biggest concern was the economy and jobs and 39% cited the war in Iraq. Certainly these issues also were on teenagers’ minds four years ago, but the lack of a resolution in Iraq and still-growing concerns about the economy make them particularly acute now.

### Students’ Most Important Issues

*One or two most important issues to me if I were deciding for whom to vote in the presidential election this November*



Students who are further along in high school show heightened concern about the economy and jobs, suggesting that economic fears hit closer to home as graduation nears. Seniors (41%) are much more likely than are freshman (27%) to site the economy and jobs as one of the top issues for the next president to address.

Significant proportions of teens also choose the environment and global warming (28%) and education (25%) as top issues of concern. As this report will show, students consider global warming an urgent problem and they continue to give their schools lackluster grades.

Fewer students rate health care (16%), terrorism and national security (13%), civil liberties and civil rights (11%), or moral values (10%) among the most important issues to them if they were to vote in November.

### **Elections Important, But Few Students Are Paying Attention**

This year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey also asked high school students for more in-depth opinions on several specific issues, including the upcoming elections. Although students say they care who wins the November election and feel that the outcome will make a large difference in terms of the direction of the country and important issues, few say they are following the presidential campaigns closely.

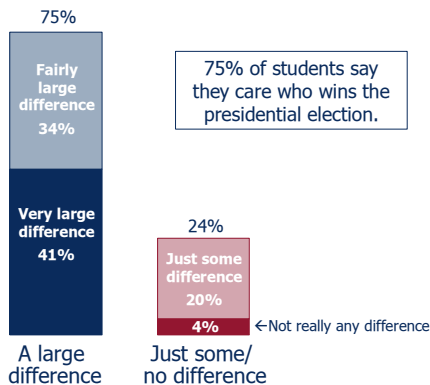
Three in four (75%) teens say they care about who wins the presidential election in November; only 22% say they do not really care who wins. Indeed, more than half (52%) of students think there are real differences between the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates this year. About two in five (39%) students think the candidates are pretty much the same.

With the United States' first African-American major party nominee running for president, it is not surprising to find African-American teenagers (82%) particularly focused on the outcome of this race. Far more of them say they care who wins than either Caucasians (75%) or Hispanics (73%).

A belief that the outcome of the fall election will make a large difference tempers teens' overall pessimism about the country's direction. Three-quarters (75%) of students say it will make a large difference in the direction of the country and important issues, including 41% who say it will make a very large difference. By contrast, just 20% of high school students say it will only make some difference and 4% say it will not really make any difference at all.

## Electoral Stakes

*How much difference do you think the outcome of this election will make in terms of the direction of the country and important issues ?*



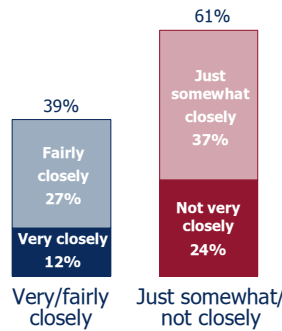
Just as African-American students are more likely to say they care who wins the election, they also are more likely (83%) than Hispanic (69%) or Caucasian (73%) students to say that the election will make a very or fairly large difference in the direction of the country. Indeed, there is no question that the 2008 presidential election has the potential to be a landmark year for this generation of African-Americans.

Yet despite claiming to care about the election and feeling as though its outcome will have important consequences, just one in ten (12%) students is following news about the campaigns for this year's presidential election very closely. An additional 27% say they are following the news fairly closely. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of students, however, say they are only following the election somewhat closely, and 24% say they are not following it closely at all. Even among 18-year-olds, most of whom will be eligible to vote, just 47% say they are paying very or fairly close attention. Among 15-year-olds, only 32% say they are paying very or fairly close attention.

Students in the suburbs (51%) are much more likely to be paying attention to news about the election than are students in other types of areas. “A” students (53%) also are more likely to be paying attention.

## Campaign Coverage

*How closely have you been following news about the campaigns for this year's presidential election?*



When it comes to how teenagers get news—about the election or any other topic—television is still the dominant source. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of students cite some sort of television programming as among their most important sources for news. Local television news (33%) is the most common source, followed by cable television news (26%), network news (12%), and comedy news shows (7%). Students in rural areas (42%) are much more likely to use local news as an important source than are students in other types of areas.

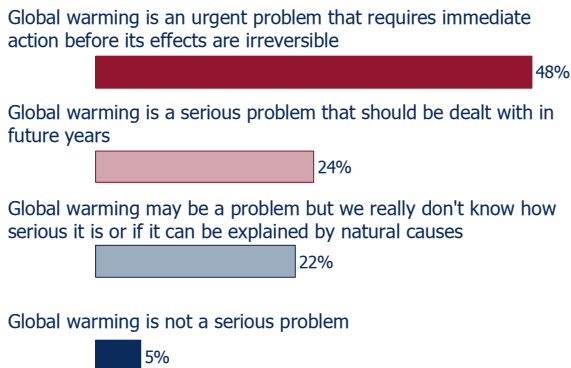
One in three (33%) students cites the Internet as a primary news source. One in five (20%) students uses news Web sites, and 13% use online blogs. Hispanics (25%) are the most likely to use news Web sites for information, compared with 20% of Caucasian students and 16% of African-American students. Seventeen percent (17%) of teens depend on newspapers as a primary source for news, and 13% get their news on the radio.

## Global Warming Is A Serious Problem

On the issue of global warming, nearly three-quarters (72%) describe global warming as an urgent or serious problem. Nearly half (48%) of teens say that global warming is an urgent problem that requires immediate action before its effects become irreversible, and one in four (24%) feels that it is a serious problem that should be dealt with in future years.

### Global Warming

*When it comes to global warming, which one of these statements comes closest to your opinion?*



One in five (22%) thinks that global warming may be a problem but that we really do not know how serious it is or whether natural causes can explain the effects. Just 5% of students believe that global warming is not a serious problem.

The strength of opinion these students express regarding global warming is particularly interesting considering only 39% of today's teens think of themselves as "environmentalists." Global warming certainly is an issue that relates to the environment, but at least for this generation, caring about it does not require being an environmentalist.

Among high school students, girls (77%) are more likely than are boys (67%) to see global warming as an urgent or serious concern. Hispanics also are notably more likely to feel that global warming constitutes an imposing threat—82% compared with 69% of African-Americans and 67% of Caucasians.

## Students Are Divided On The Effects Of Immigration

This year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey also asked teenagers for their opinions on immigration, another hot-button issue. Today's high school students are more likely than their parents and grandparents to say the benefits of immigration outweigh the drawbacks, but even among teens the issue is divisive.

In a poll taken for NBC News and the *Wall Street Journal* last December, 39% of adults said that immigration helps the United States more than it hurts, while 52% said that immigration hurts more than it helps. Among students, this study finds those proportions reversed. Half (49%) of teens say that immigration helps more than it hurts and 40% say that it hurts more than it helps.

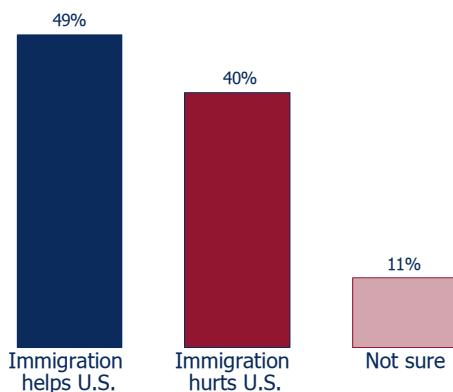
Changes in the country's demographics likely account for much of this generational difference, as ethnicity is a significant factor in predicting feelings about immigration. Immigrants and children of immigrants have a much larger presence in today's high schools than in the past. Seventy percent (70%) of Hispanic students say immigration helps more than it hurts. African-American students are divided nearly evenly: 54% feel that immigration is more of a positive than negative force. On the other end of the spectrum, just 41% of Caucasian students say that immigration helps more than it hurts.

Urban teens (54%) are more likely to feel that immigration's benefits outweigh its drawbacks than are teens in rural communities (43%). Although traditional views say that immigration is an issue that most affects the country's coasts and Southwest region, the data belie that belief indicating that immigration is an important issue in all regions. In the Northeast and South, 50% of students say that immigration helps more than it hurts. In the Midwest, just 44% of students say that immigration helps more than it hurts, but in the West, 55% say the opposite is true.

Other predictive factors in determining students' feelings about immigration are their plans after high school. While 53% of students who plan to attend a four-year college or university say that immigration helps more than it hurts, just 32% of students planning for some other type of training agree.

## Immigration

*Would you say that immigration helps the United States more than it hurts it, or hurts the United States more than it helps?*



### Nearly Half Of Students Say Steroids Are A Big Problem

The 2005 *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey asked students whether steroids were a problem in their high school and whether steroid use affected their admiration of professional athletes. Although steroid use has received a great deal of media attention in the intervening years—including high-profile Congressional hearings and the release of Major League Baseball's internal investigation report, students' opinions have not changed in any significant way.

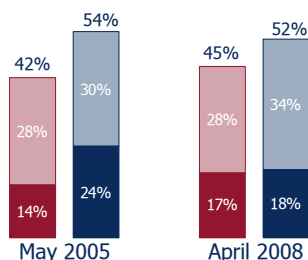
In 2005, 42% of teens felt that the use of illegal steroids among high school students was a big problem. Today, 45% of teens say that illegal steroids are a big problem. Seventeen percent (17%) of students say that illegal steroids are a really big problem. About one in three (34%) feels that steroid use is a fairly small problem and 18% say it is a really small problem.

Hispanic (52%) and African-American (54%) teens are much more likely than Caucasian (39%) teens to feel that steroids are a big problem among high school students.

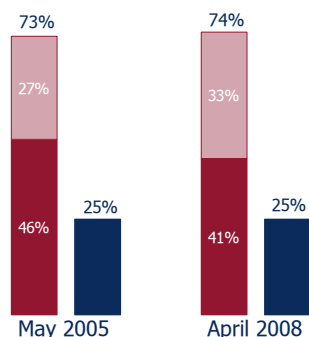
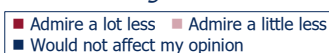


## Steroids In High Schools

*How much of a problem are illegal steroids among high school athletes?*



*How would you feel if a pro athlete whom you admire had taken illegal steroids?*



Year after year, the *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey finds few students naming an athlete as a role model. This year, for example, just 4% of teens say that their role model is an athlete. Perhaps steroids are one reason why. Three in four (74%) students say finding out that a professional athlete they admire had taken illegal steroids would make them admire that athlete less. This includes 41% of students who say that information would make them admire a professional athlete a lot less. One in four (25%) students says that knowing an athlete took steroids would not affect their opinion of them.

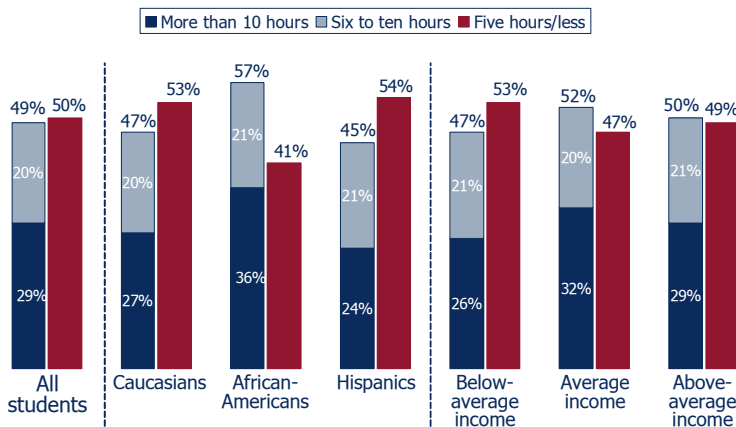
Students who spend the most time playing sports (20 hours or more) are most likely to say they would admire an athlete a lot less if they knew that he or she took steroids (50% compared with 41% overall).

## II. THE INTERNET

The Internet's increasing influence, especially among the younger generations, is well documented. This year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey confirms the Internet's impact on the lives of today's high school students. However, while most accounts focus on the Internet's ability to provide information on any subject, this year's survey also reveals that students are using it more for entertainment and social networking than for help with homework.

### Students And The Internet

*Hours per week spent using the Internet*



### Students Spend More Time Online Than Watching TV Or Talking On Cell Phones

Today's teenagers spend an average of 11.6 hours a week using the Internet—more time than they spend watching television (9.8 hours per week), talking on a cell phone (12.9 hours per week), and doing homework (8.9 hours per week). Indeed, 29% of students report spending 10 or more hours per week online and 15% of students say they are online more than 20 hours per week.

Tellingly, there is a correlation between the amount of time students spend online and the grades they report getting. While A and B students spend an average of 10.2 hours a week online, students who receive C's and lower spend an average of 12.6 hours.

# Online Activities Are Mostly About Entertainment

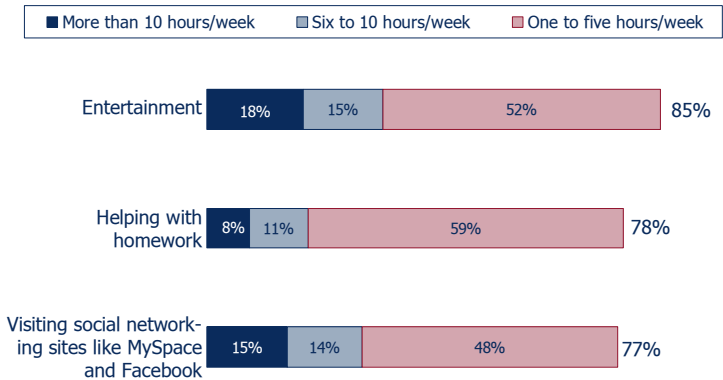
Eighty-five percent (85%) of teens say they spend at least some time each week on the Internet for entertainment purposes. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of students say they spend time on social networking sites.

Although 78% of students say they spend some time each week using the Internet for help with homework—fewer than the proportion who use the Internet for entertainment but equal to the proportion who use the Internet for social networking—it is the number of hours students spend online for each purpose that tell the real story.

Among all students, the average number of hours spent online for help with homework is 4.5 per week. Students spend nearly 6.2 additional hours each week using the Internet to browse social networking sites and 7.1 hours using the Internet for entertainment. Putting those together, students spend 13.3 hours online each week keeping up with friends and entertaining themselves and just 4.5 hours each week online for homework.

## Online Activities

*I use the Internet for the following activities*



Although lower-achieving students spend more time using the Internet for help with their homework (4.9 hours per week) than do students who receive A's (3.8 hours per week), they also are much more likely to use the Internet for social networking (7.9 hours per week; 3.5 hours) and entertainment (7.5 hours per week; 3.5 hours) than are A students.

One of the most popular social networking sites is Facebook, which 46% of high school students use. Among those who spend time on Facebook, 79% say they use it primarily to keep in touch with friends. Twenty-one percent (21%) of teens use it to make new friends. Other uses include finding and planning social events (14%), learning about new music or movies (12%), and bringing up the rear is finding help with homework (6%).

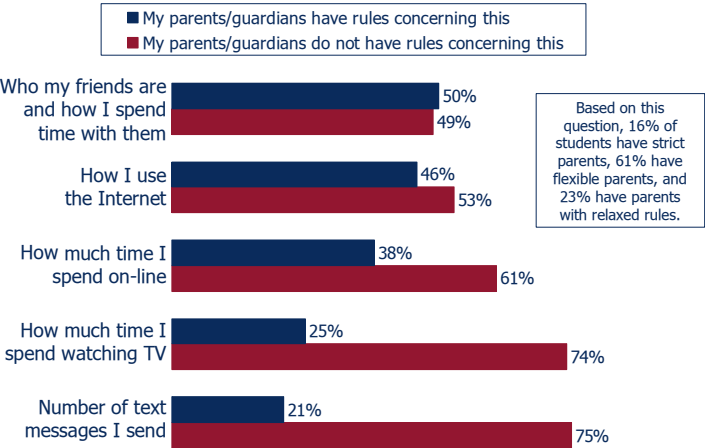
### **Only Half Of Students Say Their Parents Have Rules About Internet Use, But They Are Aware Of Online Activities**

For all of the time they spent on the Internet, barely half (46%) of teens report that their parents have rules governing how they use the Internet. An even lower proportion report having parental rules about how much time they can spend online (38%). Despite this seeming lack of parental oversight, three in four (72%) teens say their parents know a great deal or fair amount about the types of things they are doing online. Two in five (43%) students say their parents know a great deal about how they spend their time online. Sixteen percent (16%) of students say their parents know just some or very little about their online activities, and 10% say their parents know hardly anything. Almost two in five (38%) teens say that not only do their parents have rules for how they use the Internet, but they also have rules for how much time they spend online.

The data appear to indicate that parents give their children more autonomy online as they get older. Seniors (12.5 hours per week average) spend more time online than do freshman (8.9 hours per week). At the same time, seniors (31%) are much less likely than freshman (61%) to say their parents have rules for their Internet use. Not surprisingly, seniors (66%) also are much less likely than freshman (75%) to say their parents know a great deal or fair amount about how they spend their time online.

The only area in which parents have more rules for their children than for online activities is who their friends are and how they spend their time with them. Half (50%) of teenagers say their parents have rules about their friends. Fewer teens say their parents have rules for how much time they spend watching television (25%) and the number of text messages they can send (21%).

## Parental Supervision

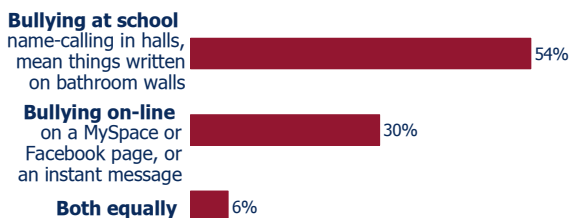


## Online Bullying Presents A New Challenge For Teens

The Internet affects students' lives in myriad ways, but among the most disturbing is the increase in online bullying. New technologies offer students new ways to do lots of things, including bullying other students. Recent news stories have even included reports of parents' bullying students, such as the mother who was recently indicted for bullying an acquaintance of her daughter who eventually committed suicide. While more than half (54%) of teens say bullying that happens at school, such as name calling in the hallways or people writing mean things on bathroom walls remains a bigger problem, a remarkable proportion (30%) of students now are more concerned about bullying that happens online, such as on a Facebook page or through instant messenger. In fact, 16% of teenagers have personal experience with online bullying and say that someone has posted something mean or hurtful about them online.

### Bullying

*Which is the bigger problem at your school?*



*Has anyone ever intentionally posted something mean or hurtful about you on-line?*



By 58% to 49%, boys are more likely than girls to view bullying in school as a bigger problem, while girls are more likely than boys (37% to 25%) to view online bullying as a bigger problem. One might expect the reverse to be true, as boys spend slightly more time engaging in online social networking than girls (6.6 average hrs/wk vs. 5.9 average hrs/wk for girls).

The type of school that teens attend and the type of area they live in also affect the type of bullying they consider more problematic. More than half (55%) of public school students consider bullying at school more of a

problem, while the same is true of only 39% of non-public school students. Teens in rural areas also believe that in-school bullying is a bigger issue (66%) compared with small towns (55%), suburbs (48%), and cities (51%).

One in four (24%) teens with below-average family incomes reports that someone has posted something mean or hurtful about them online, compared with only 14% of average-income students and 12% of above-average-income students.

III. SCHOOLS

Students Continue To Give Their Schools A “B”

Despite considerable attention paid to education by legislators, local leaders, and others over the past decade, efforts to improve schools have not made a difference, at least in the eyes of students, whose ratings of their schools have not changed since 2001.

This year, students assign grades to their schools that translate to a 2.7 grade point average. In 2001, schools also received a 2.7 grade point average. Indeed, since 2001, America’s high school students’ grades for their schools have deviated by only 0.2 in grade point average. This year, a strong plurality (46%) of students grade their schools as a B. Eighteen percent (18%) of teens rate their school as an A and 25% as a C. One in 10 (11%) students assess their schools as a D or an F.

Students Grade Their School

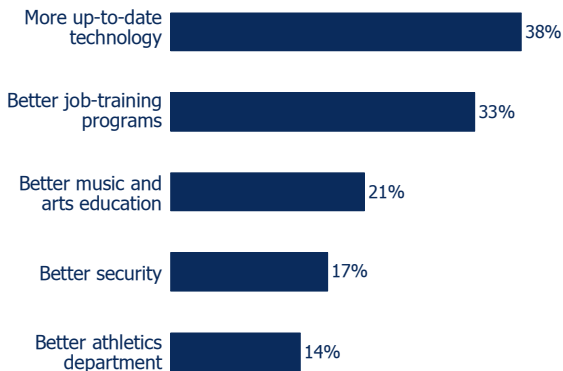
Schools’ Report Card						
	April 2008	May 2005	May 2004	May 2003	May 2002	May 2001
A	18%	21%	21%	21%	17%	20%
B	46%	51%	52%	56%	51%	48%
C	25%	22%	21%	19%	22%	22%
D	7%	4%	4%	2%	6%	6%
F	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%
GPA	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.7

This year's findings again demonstrate that the type of school students attend and the type of area where they live have an impact on students and the decisions they make. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of students surveyed attend a public school, while 12% attend a private school, charter school, are home schooled, or attend another type of school. While the average GPA given by public school students is 2.7, students who attend private schools give their school an average grade of 3.1. Just 16% of public school students give their school an A; for students enrolled in private schools that proportion is 44%.

Another indication of how important technology is in students' lives, when asked which one or two of several possible improvements would make the biggest impact on the quality of their education, more up-to-date technology (38%) is at the top of the list. Reflecting the concern students express about the economy and jobs, better job-training programs come in as a close second. Improvements ranked lower by students include better music and arts education (21%), better security (17%), and better athletics (14%).

## Reforming America's High Schools

*Which one or two of the following do you think would most improve your school and the quality of your education?*



The subjects students say will be most important in preparing them to succeed in the types of jobs they see themselves doing in the global economy echo the importance students place on science and technology in their schools. One in three (34%) students says it is most important to pay attention in science and technology classes. Students also place a premium on the value of math classes, with 26% naming math as the most important subject they will take in school. Students are much less likely to cite



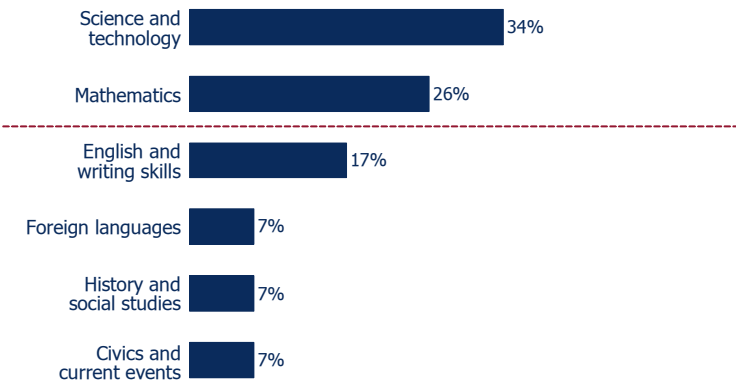
English and writing skills (17%), foreign languages (7%), history and social sciences (7%), and civics and current events (7%) as subjects that are important to their success in the global economy.

Interestingly, even students considering a career in government (34%) or running for public office (28%) choose science and technology classes as the most important in preparing them for success over history and social studies and civics.

“A” students (39%) are more likely to consider science and technology the most important subject than are students who receive C’s or below (28%). However, C students (34%) are more likely to say mathematics is critical to success than are students who receive mostly A’s (24%). In a seeming confirmation of stereotypes, boys (32%) are more likely than girls (21%) to say math classes are the most important to their future success.

## Preparation For The Future

*Which of these is the single most important subject you can take to prepare to succeed in the global economy?*



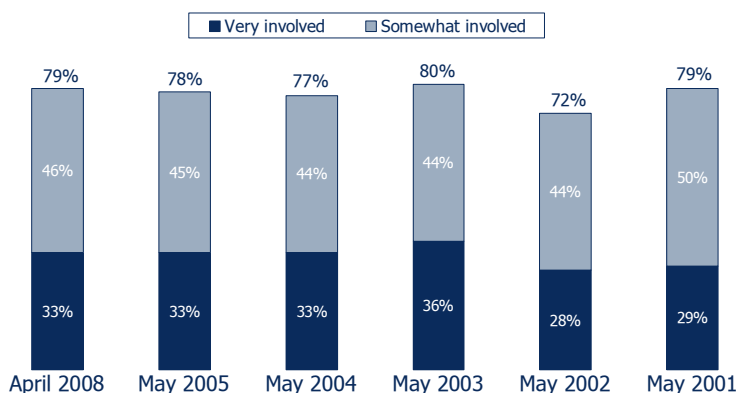
## Students Remain Highly Involved In A Variety Of Activities Both In And Out Of School

Just as the grades they give their schools have not changed over the past several years, neither has students' reported involvement in their schools. In 2001, 79% of students described themselves as very or fairly involved in their high schools. This year, the proportion is identical (79%). Indeed, the proportion of students who say they are very or fairly involved in their schools has deviated by only five points in the six times it has been measured by the *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey. One in three (33%) teens is very involved at school; 46% say they are somewhat involved. Twelve percent (12%) of students describe themselves as not that involved and just 9% say they are not involved at all.

Students who perform well academically are more involved in their schools (90%) than those who receive C's or lower (68%)—although it is important to note that even these students are very involved. Students who grade their schools with an A or B grade also are more likely to be very or somewhat involved (86%) than are those who grade their schools poorly with a C or lower (66%).

### Involvement In School

*Thinking about the activities you participate in and the time you spend at school, how involved are you in your school?*



Athletics are the most common activity to be involved with at school. Overall, 64% of teenagers report spending some time each week playing or practicing a sport and one in five (20%) students spends more than 10 hours each week. Students who play or practice a sport spend an average of 10.3

hours each week. Despite Title IX regulations, a significant gender gap remains evident in teens' athletic involvement. While 73% of boys report playing sports for an average of 11.8 hours each week, only 59% of girls say they play sports and only for 8.4 hours each week.

Although 61% of students are involved in an extracurricular activity other than athletics, students only spend an average of 7.6 hours per week on these pursuits. Thirty-seven (37%) percent of students spend between one and five hours each week on extracurricular activities and 10% of students spend more than 10 hours.

Another way students spend their time is at paying jobs. One in three (33%) teens spends some time each week working and one in ten (10%) high school students spends 20 or more hours per week working. Students who work at paying jobs work an average of 18.2 hours each week. Seniors (22.3 hours) work considerably more hours than do freshman (12.7 hours). Labor laws likely play some role in this difference, but seniors' proximity to college and "real world" expenses also plays a likely role.

Despite high-profile reports of parents over-scheduling their children, and all the time students report spending on work both in and out of school, fully 91% of high school students say they have at least some free, unscheduled time to do whatever they want. In fact, students have on average 17.7 hours of free time, and one in four (26%) teens claims to have more than 20 hours each week to do as they wish.

Boys (18.8 hours per week) report having more free time than girls (14.8). Hispanics (11.5) say they have much less free time each week than either African-Americans (17.1) or Caucasians (18.5). Students who get C's or lower on their report cards (19.6) report having much more free time than students who receive mostly A's (13.2) and students who get mostly A's and B's (16.4).

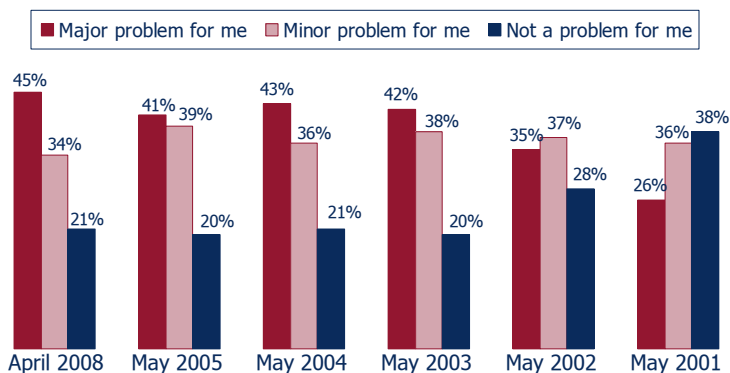
## IV. GRADES AND HOMEWORK

### Stress Over Grades Continues To Grow

Much has been made of the increased competition today's teenagers face when it comes to getting into colleges and universities. With America's second baby boom generation coming of college age and a larger proportion of teenagers overall planning for higher education, admittance letters are more prized than ever. On a list of pressures that teens face, the pressure to get good grades (45%) tops all others. In fact, combined with the second most common stress, getting into a good college (33%), 62% of today's high school students say that high school transcripts are a dominant pressure in their lives. Other problems, such as family stresses (24%), having enough money (23%), fighting with friends (11%), and fitting in at school (4%), generate less stress for students.

### Pressure Over Grades

*Is the pressure to get good grades a major problem for you, a minor problem for you, or not a problem for you?*



Between 2001 and 2002, the *State Of Our Nation's Youth* measured a significant increase in the proportion of students who said pressure to get good grades created a major problem for them. In just one year, the proportion of students for whom grade-related pressures were a problem jumped from 62% to 72%. The 2003 data confirmed the trend, as 80% of students said pressure over grades created problems for them that year. Since then, the pressure students feel over grades has stayed high. This year, nearly four in five (79%) high school students say that pressure to get good grades creates a problem for them; 45% of these students rate it as a

major problem. This pressure is remarkably consistent among the various demographic and psychographic cohorts, but heightened for two related groups of students. The first is students who report feeling major pressure in several other areas of their lives (98%). The second is students who say they feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to be just teenagers (88%).

**Students Are Spending More Time On Homework, But Their Grades Remain The Same**

Although the pressure that students feel over their grades has increased since 2001, the grades they report receiving have remained largely consistent, with some modest improvement. In 2001, 61% of teenagers reported getting mostly B’s or better on their report card. In 2004, the proportion was 70%, and this year 67% of students say their report cards show mostly B’s or better.

**Reporting Their Own Grades**

Students’ Report Card						
<i>How would you describe your last report card?</i>						
	April 2008	May 2005	May 2004	May 2003	May 2002	May 2001
Mostly A’s	25%	26%	28%	32%	22%	20%
Mix of A’s & B’s	36%	38%	36%	35%	35%	33%
Mostly B’s	6%	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%
Mix of B’s & C’s	22%	20%	21%	19%	23%	26%
C’s/below	10%	9%	9%	7%	12%	13%

One in four (25%) students claims to earn straight A’s at school. Six percent (6%) of teenagers say they get mostly B’s and 36% say their report cards reflect a mix of A’s and B’s. One in five (22%) students gets a mix of B’s and C’s and 5% say mostly C’s. Only 5% of teens say their grades are mostly D’s and F’s.

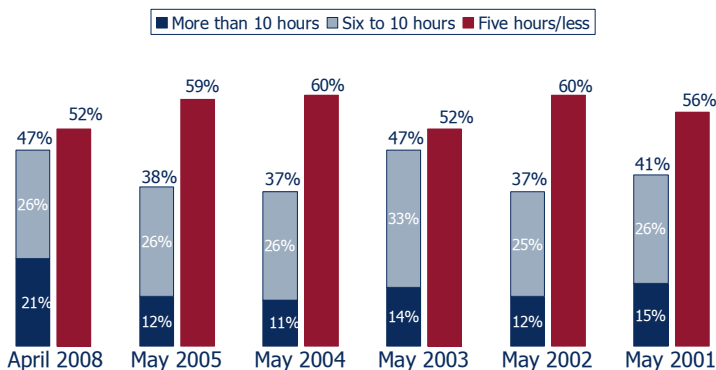
Private school students might give their schools higher grades than public school students, but the grades students receive do not discriminate.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of students in public schools report mostly A’s on their report cards, roughly the same as their counterparts in private schools (29%). Students whose parents attended college are more likely to receive mostly A’s (29%) than students whose parents did not attend college (18%). Students who plan on attending a four-year college also are more likely to receive mostly A’s (30%) than those who plan on pursuing other training (19%).

Despite increased pressure over grades, today’s high school students have, on average, twice as much free time (16.8 hours) each week as they spend on homework (8.2 hours). However, students in this year’s *State Of Our Nation’s Youth* report are spending significantly more time on their homework than in years past. One in five (21%) students dedicates more than 10 hours each week to homework. In 2005, just 12% of students reported spending as much time on their homework, a proportion that had been largely stable since 2001. This year one in four (26%) students spends six to 10 hours on their homework and 44% spend between one and five hours.

## Time Spent On Homework

*Hours per week spent doing homework*



African-American students (10.2 hours) say they spend more time each week on their homework than do Caucasian students (8 hours) and Hispanic students (7.1 hours). Students in cities (9.4 hours) and suburbs (8.8 hours) spend more time on their homework than do students in small towns (7.2 hours) and rural areas (6.9 hours). Also, although their grades are no

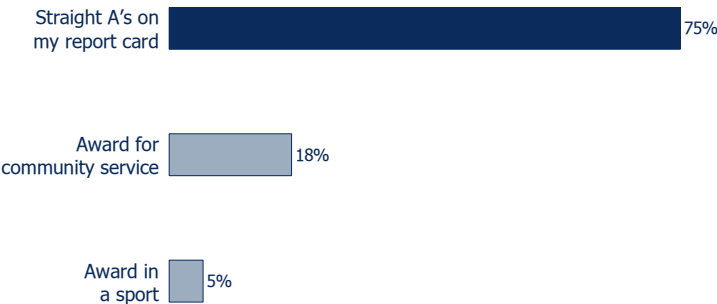
different, students in private schools (10.4 hours) say they spend more time on their homework than public school students (7.9 hours).

**Students Say That Getting Good Grades Is The Easiest Way To Make Parents Proud**

Adding to the pressure students feel over their grades, they overwhelmingly say that their parents would be more proud of them for receiving straight A’s on their report cards (75%) than for receiving an athletic (5%) or community service award (18%). Although students in all cohorts say their parents would be most proud of straight A’s, the margin of students who say this is the case differs vastly.

**Making Parents Proud**

*If you came home from school tomorrow and told your parents about an award you received, which do you think would make them proudest of you?*



African-American students (91%) are the most likely to say that straight A’s would make their parents proudest. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of Hispanic students say that straight A’s would most impress their parents; 69% of Caucasian students say the same. More Caucasian students believe that their parents would put the greatest emphasis on receiving a community award (23%) than do Hispanics (15%) and African-Americans (5%).

While 23% of girls believe that their parents would be most proud of an award for community service, just 12% of boys say the same. Although boys report spending more time playing sports than do girls, they are no more likely (6% vs. 4% for girls) to say that an award for sports would make their parents most proud.

Students who already receive mostly A's are less likely to say that straight A's would impress their parents most (63%) than students who report receiving A's and B's (77%) or C's and lower (82%). This suggests that once students achieve straight A's they assume their parents expect continued achievement.

Teenagers with strict parents are more likely to say that their parents would be proud of a community service award (27%) than teens with flexible (16%) or relaxed (16%) parents. However, teenagers with relaxed (77%) or flexible (76%) parents say their parents would be more proud of straight A's than teens with strict parents (66%).



## V. COLLEGE AND CAREERS

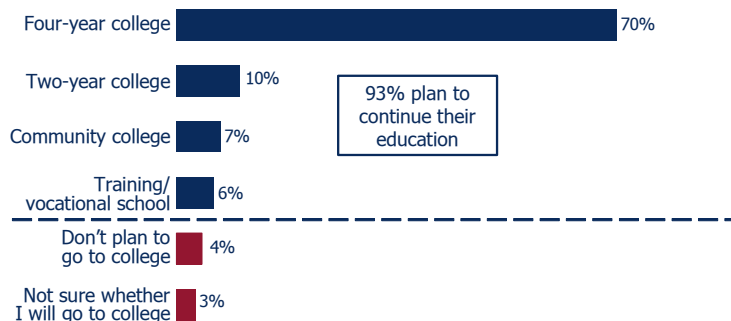
### Most Students Have Their Sights Set On A Four-Year Degree

This year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* finds that seven in ten (70%) high school students plan to attend a four-year college or university sometime after completing high school. This is down from a high of 80% in 2003, but consistent with the 66% and 68% who reported the same intent in 2002 and 2001 respectively.

Nearly one in four (23%) students plans to pursue some other type of training after high school, with 10% saying they are planning for a two-year college, 7% for a community college, and 6% for a vocational or technical school. Just 4% of teenagers have no plans for continuing their education after high school.

### College Plans

*Do you plan to go to college sometime after high school?*



In this study, African-Americans (78%) are more likely to have plans for a four-year degree than either Caucasian (67%) or Hispanic (70%) students. A greater proportion of teens in suburban areas plan to attend a four-year school (80%) than those in cities (69%), small towns (67%), or rural areas (66%). Students who describe their family income as above average (76%) and those with parents who attended college (76%) are more likely to have plans for a four-year degree than are their counterparts who describe their family's income as below average (63%) and whose parents who did not attend college (61%).

As might be expected, teens with higher grades (mostly A's 86%; A's and B's 74%) plan to attend a four-year university at higher rates than teens with C's and lower (54%). However, only 6% of teens with low grades are not planning to continue their education in some way after high school.

Health concerns, including the cost and availability of health care, appear to play a role in students' plans for higher education. While 16% of students who are planning to attend a four-year school say that health concerns are a major problem for them, that proportion is doubled (32%) among students who have other plans for their post-high school education. In a related finding, one in five (22%) teenagers bound for a four-year college says that financial pressure is a major problem for them, but 34% of teens who plan for an alternative type of education have a major problem with financial pressure.

With all the pressure students report feeling about their grades, some might expect them to feel that their parents are too involved with their college application. On the contrary, it appears that either the pressure students feel is pressure they put on themselves, or the pressure is so great they welcome their parents' help. Overall, 79% of college-bound juniors and seniors say their parents are involved just the right amount when it comes to applying to colleges and deciding which school to attend. Just 14% of students say their parents are too involved and 7% complain their parents are not involved enough. Seniors (77%) are as likely as freshman (82%) to say that their parents' involvement feels just right.

## **Students' Preparations Start Early In High School Careers**

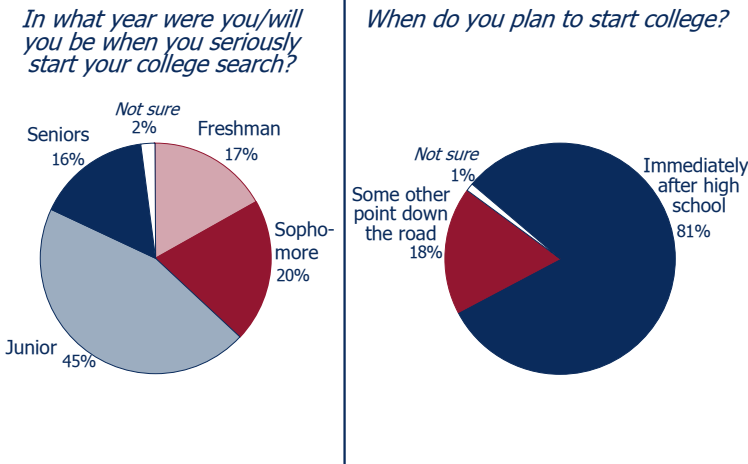
Nearly half (47%) of students are preparing themselves for college while still in high school by taking Advanced Placement and college preparatory classes. One in ten (10%) high school students is taking at least one Advanced Placement class and a college prep class. One in five (21%) students is taking one or more Advanced Placement classes and 16% are taking one or more college prep classes. These proportions are similar to those measured in the 2005 *State Of Our Nation's Youth* study.

Not surprisingly, seniors (61%) are more likely to be taking Advanced Placement classes than their younger classmates, but interestingly, the proportion of college-bound juniors and seniors enrolled in preparatory classes is nearly identical to the overall proportion.

The location of a school also dictates the rate at which students take Advanced Placement classes. Nearly twice as many suburban students (31%) take AP classes compared with students in cities (16%), small towns (20%), and rural areas (16%). Indeed, 58% of suburban students are taking some sort of class to prepare themselves for college.

When it comes to seriously beginning their college search, nearly two in five (37%) college-bound students plan to start before their junior year. Indeed, 17% say they plan to start looking as freshman. A plurality of teenagers (45%) say they plan to start their college search seriously as juniors and 16% say they will wait until their senior year. Suggesting either a growing urgency to start looking or procrastination, freshmen are more likely than average to see themselves starting the search early (80% freshmen/sophomore year), and seniors are more likely than average to see themselves starting the search late (36%).

## College Plans



Reflecting a trend reported by the *New York Times* in the June 2008 article, “In a Year Off the Beaten Path, a New Direction for Life,” nearly one in five (18%) college-bound high school students plans to start their college education at some point down the road rather than immediately after high school. Students with lower grades (29%) and students who are not particularly involved at school (30%) are the most likely to say they plan to delay starting college.

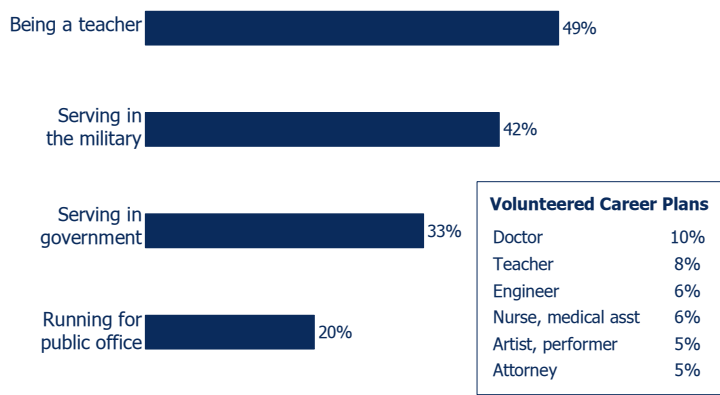
# Students Also Are Planning Ahead For Their Professional Lives

It is a good thing so many of today’s students are planning for higher education—nearly all their top choices for future careers require several years of college or professional schooling. When thinking ahead to the kind of job they hope to have in 20 years, the top choice among students in an open-ended question is doctor or surgeon (10%), followed closely by a teacher or professor (8%), engineer (6%), nurse/medical assistant (6%), arts or entertainment (5%), or lawyer or attorney (5%).

Hispanics are twice as likely to see themselves as a lawyer or attorney (12%) in the future compared with African-Americans (6%) and four times more likely than Caucasians (3%). Those who excel in school, receiving mostly A’s (12%), are more likely to volunteer plans for a teaching career compared with those who receive C’s or lower (5%).

## Thoughts On Specific Careers

*I have thought about doing this as an adult.*



When asked directly about several possible career tracks, half (49%) of students say they have thought about becoming a teacher, 42% have thought about joining the military, 33% have thought about serving in government, and 20% have thought about running for public office.

Particularly when it comes to interest in military service, the differences in the demographics of students who say they have thought about it are fascinating and indeed timely. Students who plan to attend a four-year

college (39%) are much less likely than students with other plans for other training (63%) to have considered military service. Perhaps those students who are planning for other training hope to take advantage of military training or post-enlistment college benefits.

Boys are still more likely to consider military service (55%) than girls (30%). Rural teens (47%) also are more apt to consider the military than are urban teens (37%). Despite presumptions of lower-income individuals' serving more often in the military, interest in doing so is distributed evenly among teens with family incomes at all levels (below average, 43%; average, 44%; above average 41%).

And, confirming another stereotype, girls predominately are more likely to have thought about becoming a teacher (55%) than boys (43%).

## **VI. PRESSURE AND POSITIVE INFLUENCES**

Although each generation of students faces unique forms of pressure and stress, some things never change. This report already has covered several stresses that confront today's teens—grades and the economy for example—but social pressures are as much a problem as ever and a significant faction of students say they feel too much pressure to act as an adult.

### **Most Students Feel Free To Be Teenagers, But A Significant Minority Are Held Back By Adult Pressures**

Overall, 59% of high school students say they are free to act their age and just be teenagers. However, nearly two in five (37%) students say they feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to just be teenagers. Many factors might contribute to this feeling that students are not free to act their age. Financial problems are one possibility, as half (52%) of students whose family income is below average say they are forced to behave older than their age. This pressure to act like an adult also increases as students move through high school. Two-thirds of 19-year-olds say they feel pressure to act as an adult, compared with 29% of 14-year-olds.

# Being A Teenager

*With which one of these groups do you most fit?*

Teens who feel free to enjoy high school and just be teenagers



Teens who feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to just be teenagers



## Stress Over Grades Is Not The Only Pressure Students Feel

This report already has discussed the pressure students feel to get good grades at length. Grades, however, are far from being the only pressure that students face. Though to lesser degrees, students cite several other pressures as problems. Overall, 63% of students in this year's *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey fall into the "under control" category. These students may have one or two pressures that create problems in their lives, but for the most part, they feel comfortable with the pressures they face. On the other side, however, 37% of students fall into the "under pressure" category. These students say that multiple pressures create problems for them and many of those pressures lead to major problems.

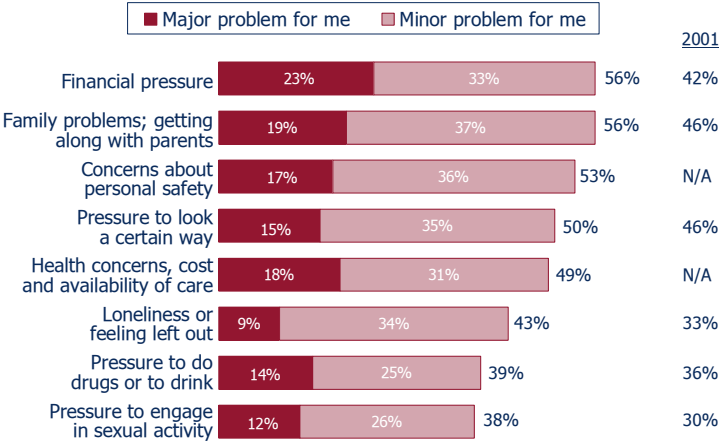
Reflecting their concern about economic issues, more than half (56%) of students this year say that financial pressures are creating problems for them, including one in four (23%) who say that financial pressures are creating major problems in their lives. Although the overall proportion of students who say that financial pressure creates problems for them has been steady since 2001, the proportion who say it creates major problems is up five points from 2005 and eight points since 2001.

The same proportion (56%) of students say that family pressures or not getting along with their parents creates problems for them, including 19% who say the problems are major.

Other pressures that create problems for students include concerns about personal safety (53%), pressure to look a certain way (50%), pressure to do drugs or drink (39%), pressure to engage in sexual activity before they are ready (38%), and loneliness (43%).

The pressures students report feeling to do drugs or drink and to engage in sexual activity before they are ready both are up slightly this year. The pressure to do drugs or drink is up four points since 2005 and the pressure to engage in sexual activity also is up four points. Importantly, all the growth is in the proportion of students who say that each creates a major problem in their life.

## Social And Family Pressures



## Students Report Having Positive Influences To Help Them Deal With The Pressures They Face

As students confront the problems and challenges that come with being a teenager—and for some, the problems and challenges that come with being an adult—this year’s survey findings indicate that they are benefiting from the positive influence of family role models.

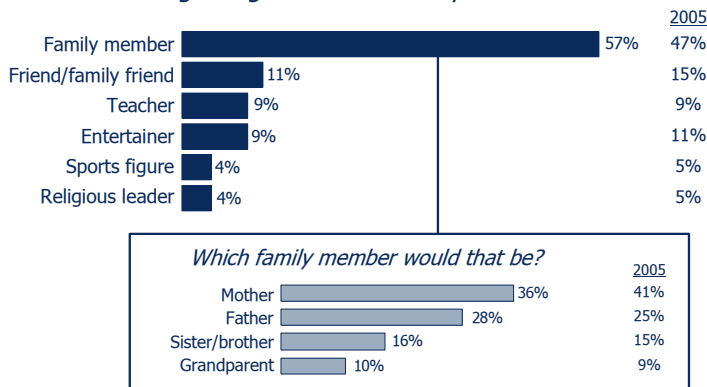
Family members always have been the most common role models named by teenagers in past *State Of Our Nation’s Youth* surveys. This year is no exception, and in fact, the proportion of students who name a family member as their role model has grown significantly since 2005. In that

survey, 47% of teens named a family member as their role model. This year, that proportion jumps 10 points to 57% percent.

When students are asked to name the specific family member who is their role model, parents (64%) are by far the most common choices, with mothers (36%) having an edge over fathers (28%). Girls (52%) are more likely to favor their mothers while boys tend to pick their fathers (47%).

## Students' Role Models

*If you had to pick one person as a role model, in which of the following categories would that person be?*



Other, less commonly cited role models include a friend or a family friend (11%), a teacher or educator (9%), an entertainment figure (9%), a sports figure (4%), or a religious leader (4%).

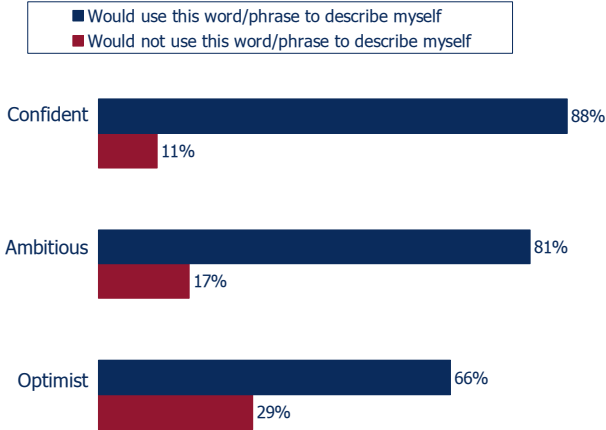
This year's survey findings also indicate that religion has a positive influence on some students' lives. Just over half (53%) of students say they consider themselves religious people. Religion is most likely to have an impact in the South, where 62% of teenagers consider themselves religious, than in the Midwest (53%), West (50%), or Northeast (44%). African-American students (62%) are more likely to say they are religious than are Caucasian (53%) and Hispanic (49%) students. Private school students (66%) are more likely than public school students (52%) to say they are religious.



**Students Are Confident In Their Ability To Achieve The Goals They Set For Themselves**

This report of findings began with bad news—students are increasingly pessimistic about the country’s direction. It ends, however, with good news. Despite their big picture pessimism and specific problems, students are overwhelmingly confident in themselves and their futures. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teenagers say they would use the word “confident” to describe themselves. More than nine in ten (93%) teens say they are very or fairly confident that they will reach their career goals. Sixty-two percent (62%) of teens are very confident about reaching their goals.

**Students’ Self Image**



Overall, Caucasian (95%), African-American (91%), and Hispanic (90%) students are equally likely to have confidence that they will reach their career goals. However, 74% of African-American students say they are very confident, compared with 59% of Caucasian and 60% of African-American students.

Again despite their pessimism about the world, 66% of students say they would use the word “optimist” to describe themselves. Perhaps this accounts for the difference between their outlook for the country and the far bleaker outlook expressed by their parents and grandparents. Finally, 81% of students say they would use the word “ambitious” to describe themselves, suggesting they have the gumption to justify their confidence.

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## RESEARCH METHODS

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Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., one of the leading survey research firms in the United States, conducted the 2008-2009 *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey. In operation for more than 35 years, the firm has conducted well over 5,000 public opinion surveys, and has administered and analyzed interviews among more than three million individuals in that time. Hart Research also has undertaken more than 4,000 focus group sessions.

Since 1989, Hart Research, in conjunction with Robert Teeter's Coldwater Corporation, and now with Public Opinion Strategies, has conducted the public opinion surveys for NBC News and *The Wall Street Journal*. This represents the first time any outside firm was retained by a network to conduct surveys that bear the name of the sponsoring organization. These surveys are widely regarded as barometers of American opinion.

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc., conducted the 2008-2009 *State Of Our Nation's Youth* survey from April 21 to 26, 2008. The survey was conducted by telephone among 1,006 students across the country. The sample of high school students was based on a compiled list provided by American Student List, the well-respected national list management firm, which specializes in maintaining lists of K-12 students. Selected telephone numbers were called randomly with the sample structured to ensure appropriate geographic representation.

Within each household, students were selected by a procedure designed to provide an approximate balance of respondents by gender and age. Only students age 13 to 19 that identified themselves as ninth through twelfth graders (or freshmen through seniors in high school) were accepted as survey respondents.

The data's statistical margin of sampling error is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points among all students at the 95% confidence level, although sample tolerances for subgroups are larger and sampling error is just one form of error or bias that can affect survey results. Minimal weights have been applied to sex and grade level.

The data reported here are the property of the Horatio Alger Association, which must be credited whenever these results are cited.

## DATA TABLES

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY AGE	
	High School Students %
12 years old or younger	-
13 years old	1
14 years old	10
15 years old	26
16 years old	24
17 years old	25
18 years old	12
19 years old	2
20 years old or older	-
Not sure	-
How old are you?	

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GRADE LEVEL	
	High School Students %
Ninth grade/freshman in high school	30
Tenth grade/sophomore in high school	26
Eleventh grade/junior in high school	23
Twelfth grade/senior in high school	21
Other (VOL)	-
No answer	-
What year or grade in school are you currently in? If you've already finished the school year, what grade did you just complete?	

THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY					
	High School Students				
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>11/01</u> %
Hopeful and optimistic	53	68	75	73	78
Worried and pessimistic	39	26	21	23	19
Not sure	8	6	4	4	3
When you think about the future of the country, would you say that you are mainly hopeful and optimistic, or mainly worried and pessimistic?					

TOP ISSUES IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	
	High School Students %
The economy and jobs	34
The war in Iraq	31
The environment and global warming	28
Education	25
Health care	16
Terrorism and national security	13
Civil liberties and civil rights	11
Moral values	10
Other (VOL)	1
None (VOL)	-
Not sure	1
If you were going to vote in the presidential election this November, which ONE or TWO of the following issues would be the most important to you in deciding who to vote for?	

<b>FOLLOWING COVERAGE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION</b>	
	<b>High School Students</b> %
Very closely	12
Fairly closely	27
Just somewhat closely	37
Not very closely	24
Not sure	-
How closely have you been following news about the campaigns for this year's presidential election--very closely, fairly closely, just somewhat closely, or not very closely?	

<b>DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CANDIDATES</b>	
	<b>High School Students</b> %
Real differences	52
Pretty much the same	39
Not sure	9
Do you think that there are real differences between the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates this year, or do you think they are pretty much the same?	

<b>CARING ABOUT THE ELECTION’S OUTCOME</b>	
	<b>High School Students</b> %
Care who wins	75
Don't really care who wins	22
Not sure	3
Do you care who wins the presidential election this November, or do you not really care?	

POTENTIAL FOR ELECTION OUTCOME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE	
	High School Students %
A very large difference	41
A fairly large difference	34
Just some difference	20
Not really any difference at all	4
Not sure	1
How much of a difference do you think the outcome of this election will make in terms of the direction of the country and important issues—do you think that it will make a very large difference, a fairly large difference, just some difference, or not really any difference at all?	

GLOBAL WARMING	
	High School Students %
<b>Statement A</b> /Global warming is an urgent problem that requires immediate action before its effects are irreversible	48
<b>Statement B</b> /Global warming is a serious problem that should be dealt with in future years	24
<b>Statement C</b> /Global warming may be a problem but we really don't know how serious it is or if it can be explained by natural causes	22
<b>Statement D</b> /Global warming is not a serious problem	5
Not sure	1
Now when it comes to global warming, which of the following four statements comes closest to your opinion?	

IMMIGRATION	
	High School Students %
Helps more than it hurts	49
Hurts more than it helps	40
Not sure	11
Would you say that immigration helps the United States more than it hurts it, OR immigration hurts the United States more than it helps it?	

TOP NEWS SOURCES	
	High School Students %
Local television news	33
Cable television news	26
News Web sites	20
Newspapers	17
Online blogs	13
The radio	13
Network news	12
Comedy news shows	7
Not sure	1
Which one or two of the following would you say are important sources for you in getting news about what is going in the country?	

## SELF-REPORTED GRADES ON LAST REPORT CARD

	High School Students					
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>5/01</u> %
Mostly A's	25	26	28	32	22	20
Mostly B's	6	7	6	7	8	8
A mix of A's and B's	36	38	36	35	35	33
Mostly C's	5	5	5	4	6	7
A mix of B's and C's	22	20	21	19	23	26
Most were below C's	5	4	4	3	6	6
Not sure/refused	1	-	-	-	-	-
Which of these choices comes the closest to describing the grades you received on your last report card?						

## INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

	High School Students					
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>5/01</u> %
Very involved	33	33	33	36	28	29
Somewhat involved	46	45	44	44	44	50
Not that involved	12	12	13	13	15	14
Not involved at all	9	10	10	7	12	7
Not sure	-	-	-	-	1	-
Thinking about the activities you participate in and the time you spend at school, how involved would you say you are in your school—very involved, somewhat involved, not that involved, or not involved at all						



STUDENTS GRADE THEIR SCHOOL						
	High School Students					
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>5/01</u> %
A	18	21	21	21	17	20
B	46	51	52	56	51	48
C	25	22	21	19	22	22
D	7	4	4	2	6	6
F	4	2	2	2	3	4
Not sure	-	-	-	-	1	-
<i>GRADE POINT AVERAGE</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>2.9</i>	<i>2.7</i>	<i>2.7</i>
If you could give your school a grade from A to F, what grade would you give it?						

MOST IMPORTANT POTENTIAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS	
	High School Students %
If your school offered students more up-to-date technology	38
If your school had better job-training programs	33
If your school had better music and arts education	21
If your school had better security	17
If your school had a better athletics department	14
Other (VOL)	1
None (VOL)	2
Not sure	2
Which one or two of the following do you think would most improve your school and the quality of your education?	

COLLEGE PREP/AP COURSES			
	High School Students		
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %
Yes, college prep classes	16	17	25
Yes, advanced placement classes	21	21	19
Yes, both college prep and advanced placement classes	10	11	NA
No	52	51	55
Not sure	1	-	1
Are you currently taking any college prep classes or advanced placement classes?			

WHAT MAKES PARENTS PROUD	
	High School Students %
Getting straight A's on your report card	75
Getting an award in a sport	5
Receiving an award for community service	18
Not sure	2
If you came home from school tomorrow and told your parents about an award you received, which do you think would make them prouder of you—getting straight A's on your report card, getting an award in a sport, or getting an award for community service?	

POST-HIGH SCHOOL PLANS						
	High School Students					
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>5/01</u> %
No, do not plan to go to college	4	3	3	3	6	5
Yes, plan to go to a four-year college or university	70	76	73	80	66	68
Yes, plan to go to a two-year college or university	10	6	8	6	10	7
Yes, plan to go to a training or vocational school	6	5	4	3	5	6
Yes, plan to go to a community college	7	7	7	5	8	7
Not sure	3	3	5	3	5	3
Do you plan to go to college sometime after you graduate from high school? (IF "YES," ASK ) Which of the following best describes the kind of college you plan to go to--a four-year college or university, a two-year college or university, a training or vocational school, or a community college?						

START OF COLLEGE SEARCH	
	High School Students %
Freshman year	17
Sophomore year	20
Junior year	45
Senior year	16
Not sure	2
What year were you, or will you be, when you seriously start your college search—your freshman year, sophomore year, junior year, or senior year?	

STARTING COLLEGE	
	High School Students %
Plan to start immediately after high school	81
Plan to start at some other point down the road	18
Not sure	1
Do you plan to start college in the fall immediately after you graduate from high school or at some other point further down the road?	

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN COLLEGE SEARCH	
	High School Students %
Too involved	14
Not involved enough	7
Involved just the right amount	79
Not sure	-
When it comes to applying to colleges and deciding which school to attend, do you think your parents will be too involved, not involved enough, or involved just the right mount?	

## CAREER PLANS— TOP RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

	<b>High School Students</b> %
Doctor, surgeon	10
Teacher, professor	8
Engineer	6
Nurse, medical assistant	6
Arts, entertainment, singer, performing arts, actor, actress	5
Attorney, lawyer	5
Don't know/no response	6
Looking ahead to when you finish school, what do you want to be when you grow up?	

## CONFIDENCE IN ACHIEVING CAREER GOALS

	<b>High School Students</b> %
Very confident	62
Fairly confident	31
Just somewhat confident	6
Not that confident	1
Not sure	-
And still thinking ahead about what you want to be when you grow up and your career goals, how confident are you that you will reach those goals—are you very confident, fairly confident, just somewhat confident, or not that confident?	

THOUGHTS ON SPECIFIC CAREERS			
	High School Students		
	Yes, Have Thought About It %	No, Have Not Thought About It %	Not Sure %
Being a teacher	49	51	-
Serving in the military	42	57	1
Serving in government	33	66	1
Running for public office	20	80	-
Some people start thinking at a very young age about the idea of <b>(READ ITEM)</b> when they are adults. Is that something you have thought about doing when you are an adult, or have you not thought about that?			

SUBJECT MOST LIKELY TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED IN GLOBAL ECONOMY	
	High School Students %
Science and technology	34
Mathematics	26
English and writing skills	17
Foreign languages	7
History and social studies	7
Civics and current events	7
Not sure	2
Thinking about the different subjects that you take in school, which of the following areas do you think will be most important in preparing you to succeed in the types of jobs you see yourself doing in the global economy?	

## OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

	High School Students				
	<u>Mean</u> #	<u>1 To 5</u> Hours %	<u>6 To 10</u> Hours %	<u>11 To 20</u> Hours %	<u>More Than 20</u> Hours %
<b>Have free, unscheduled time to do whatever you want</b>					
April 2008	17.7	26	21	18	26
<b>Use the Internet for any reason</b>					
April 2008	11.6	45	20	14	15
<b>Watch television</b>					
April 2008	9.8	45	22	13	11
<b>Talk on your cell phone</b>					
April 2008	12.9	35	11	9	12
<b>Do homework</b>					
April 2008	8.9	44	26	14	7
May 2005	NA	59	26	10	2
May 2004	NA	60	26	10	1
May 2003	NA	52	33	11	3
May 2002	NA	60	25	10	2
May 2001	NA	56	26	12	3
<b>Play or practice a sport</b>					
April 2008	10.3	26	18	15	5
<b>Work at a paying job</b>					
April 2008	18.2	6	6	11	10
<b>Participate in an extracurricular activity other than athletics</b>					
April 2008	7.6	37	14	6	4
<b>Volunteer or do community service</b>					
April 2008	6.0	50	9	5	3
<b>Work out in a gym</b>					
April 2008	7.0	36	14	6	3
I'm going to list some activities and ask you to tell me how many hours each week you spend on each. If you don't spend any time on a particular activity, just say so.					

FAMILY MEMBERS PRESENT IN STUDENTS' HOMES				
	High School Students			
	4/08 %	5/05 %	5/04 %	5/03 %
Mother	88	90	89	94
Father	70	69	74	80
Brother(s)	51	48	48	51
Sister(s)	46	49	45	49
Grandparent(s)	8	5	6	3
Stepfather	4	6	5	5
Stepmother	3	3	3	2
Cousin	2	NA	NA	NA
Nephew/Niece	2	NA	NA	NA
Stepbrother(s)	1	1	2	2
Stepsister(s)	1	1	2	1
Aunt	1	NA	NA	NA
Uncle	1	NA	NA	NA
Other	3	-	5	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-
Would you please tell me what family members live with you?				

ROLE MODELS						
	High School Students					
	4/08 %	5/05 %	5/04 %	5/03 %	5/02 %	5/01 %
Family member	57	47	51	44	42	46
Friend/family friend	11	15	12	10	16	16
Teacher/educator	9	9	8	10	8	7
Entertainment figure/artist or writer	9	11	10	10	12	12
Sports figure	4	5	6	8	7	7
Religious leader	4	5	6	7	5	6
National political leader	2	1	2	3	NA	NA
Business leader	2	3	2	3	3	3
International political leader	1	1	1	2	NA	NA
Local political or community leader	-	1	-	1	NA	NA
Other	-	1	-	-	1	-
Not sure	1	1	2	2	2	1
Please think about one particular person whom you would consider a role model. If you had to pick one person as a role model, which of the following categories would your role model be in?						

## FAMILY-SPECIFIC ROLE MODEL

	High School Students					
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %	<u>5/04</u> %	<u>5/03</u> %	<u>5/02</u> %	<u>5/01</u> %
Mother	36	41	33	37	38	40
Father	28	25	32	30	27	26
Grandparent	10	9	8	9	7	9
Brother	8	9	12	8	11	7
Sister	8	6	8	7	5	7
Uncle	3	2	3	5	NA	NA
Cousin	3	5	3	2	NA	NA
Aunt	3	2	3	5	NA	NA
Other	-	1	1	-	1	1
Not sure	1	-	-	1	2	1

What family member do you consider a role model? (ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY THAT THEIR ROLE MODEL IS A FAMILY MEMBER IN Q.26a.)

## STEROIDS AND HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

	High School Students	
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %
A really big problem	17	14
A fairly big problem	28	28
A fairly small problem	34	30
A really small problem	18	24
Not sure	3	4

Lately, there has been lots of attention focused on illegal steroids that can make athletes stronger or improve their performance. How much of a problem do you think illegal steroids are among high school athletes--a really big problem, a fairly big problem, a fairly small problem, or a really small problem?



STEROIDS AND STUDENTS' RESPECT FOR PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES		
	High School Students	
	<u>4/08</u> %	<u>5/05</u> %
Admire a lot less	41	46
Admire a little less	33	27
Admire more	1	1
Would not affect opinion	25	25
Not sure	-	1
If you found out that a professional athlete whom you admire had taken illegal steroids, would that make you admire him or her less, admire him or her more, or would it not affect your opinion of him or her?		

ADULT VS. TEEN RESPONSIBILITIES	
	High School Students %
Those who feel free to just be teenagers	59
Those who are not able to just be teenagers	37
Not sure	4
Some people your age tell us they feel free to enjoy high school and just be teenagers. Other people your age say they feel a lot of the same pressures as adults and are not able to just be teenagers. Which group do you most fit with—those who say they feel free to just be teenagers or those who say they are not able to just be teenagers?	

PRESSURES FACED IN HIGH SCHOOL				
	High School Students			
	Major Problem For Me %	Minor Problem For Me %	Not A Problem For Me %	Not Sure %
<b>Pressure to get good grades</b>				
April 2008	45	34	21	-
May 2005	41	39	20	-
May 2004	43	36	21	-
May 2003	42	38	20	-
May 2002	35	37	28	-
May 2001	26	36	38	-
<b>Financial pressure</b>				
April 2008	23	33	43	1
May 2005	18	36	46	-
May 2004	15	38	46	1
May 2003	12	40	47	1
May 2002	17	31	52	-
May 2001	15	27	57	1
<b>Family problems, or not getting along with your parents</b>				
April 2008	19	37	44	-
May 2005	17	40	43	-
May 2004	15	42	43	-
May 2003	15	38	47	-
May 2002	17	34	49	-
May 2001	14	32	54	-
<b>Health concerns, including the cost or availability of health care</b>				
April 2008	18	31	50	1
<b>Concerns about personal safety</b>				
April 2008	17	36	47	-
<b>Pressure to look a certain way</b>				
April 2008	15	35	49	1
May 2005	17	34	49	-
May 2004	13	39	48	-
May 2003	16	37	47	-
May 2002	13	32	55	-
May 2001	16	30	53	1
The following are problems that some high school students face. For each one I read, please tell me whether it is a major problem for you, a minor problem for you, or not a problem for you.				

PRESSURES FACED IN HIGH SCHOOL, CONTINUED				
	High School Students			
	Major Problem For Me %	Minor Problem For Me %	Not A Problem For Me %	Not Sure %
<b>Pressure to do drugs or to drink</b>				
April 2008	14	25	61	-
May 2005	9	26	65	-
May 2004	11	27	62	-
May 2003	8	27	65	-
May 2002	12	22	66	-
May 2001	12	24	64	-
<b>Pressure to engage in sexual activity before you are ready</b>				
April 2008	12	26	61	1
May 2005	8	26	66	-
May 2004	9	24	67	-
May 2003	7	24	69	-
May 2002	9	23	68	-
May 2001	10	20	69	1
<b>Loneliness or feeling left out</b>				
April 2008	9	34	57	-
May 2005	11	31	58	-
May 2004	9	32	58	1
May 2003	9	28	63	-
May 2002	8	27	64	1
May 2001	9	24	67	-
The following are problems that some high school students face. For each one I read, please tell me whether it is a major problem for you, a minor problem for you, or not a problem for you.				

BIGGEST STRESSES	
	High School Students %
Getting good grades	38
Getting into a good college	33
Family problems	24
Having enough money	23
Fights with your friends	11
Fitting in at school	4
Not sure	3
And which one or two of the following create the MOST stress in your life?	

PARENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF ONLINE ACTIVITIES	
	High School Students %
Know a great deal	43
Know a fair amount	29
Know just some	8
Know very little	8
Know hardly anything	10
Not sure	2
Being as honest as you can be, how much would you say that your parents or guardians know about the types of things you are doing online—would you say a great deal, a fair amount, just some, very little, or hardly anything?	

PARENTAL RULES			
	High School Students		
	Yes, Parents/ Guardians Have Rules %	No, Parents/ Guardians Do Not Have Rules %	Not Sure %
Who your friends are and how you spend your time with them	50	49	1
How you use the Internet	46	53	1
How much time you spend online	38	61	1
How much time you spend watching television	25	74	1
The number of text messages you can send	21	75	4
Do your parents or guardians have rules when it comes to <b>(READ ITEM)</b> ?			

INTERNET USE						
	High School Students					
	Mean #	1 To 5 Hours %	6 To 10 Hours %	11 To 15 Hours %	16 To 20 Hours %	More Than 20 Hours %
On social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook	6.2	48	14	5	3	7
Using the Internet for help with homework	4.5	59	11	4	1	3
Using the Internet for entertainment	7.1	52	15	7	4	7
Thinking about the different kinds of Web sites you visit and different things you do online, how many hours do you spend <b>(READ ITEM)</b> in an average week? <b>(IF "NOT SURE," ASK:)</b> Well, please just give me your best guess.						

REASONS FOR USING FACEBOOK	
	High School Students %
Use Facebook	35
Do not use Facebook	64
Not sure	1
(Among Facebook Users)	
Keeping in touch with friends	61
Making new friends	17
Finding and planning social events	11
Learning about new music or movies	9
Finding help with homework	4
For which of the following do you use Facebook? If you do not use Facebook, please just say so.	

ONLINE VS. IN-SCHOOL BULLYING	
	High School Students %
Bullying that happens at school bigger problem	54
Bullying that happens online bigger problem	30
Both equally	6
Not sure	10
Which do you think is a bigger problem at your school--bullying that happens at school, such as name calling in the hallways or people writing mean things on bathroom walls, or bullying that happens online, such as on a MySpace page, a Facebook page, or an instant messenger?	

ONLINE BULLYING	
	High School Students %
Yes, someone posted something mean or hurtful	16
No, no one has ever posted anything mean or hurtful	82
Not sure	2
Has anyone ever intentionally posted something mean or hurtful about you online, such as on a MySpace page, a Facebook page, or an instant messenger, or has that not happened to you?	

WORDS TEENS USE TO DESCRIBE THEMSELVES			
	High School Students		
	Yes, Would Use That Word Or Phrase To Describe Myself	No, Would Not Use That Word Or Phrase To Describe Myself	Not Sure
	%	%	%
A good friend	98	1	1
A loyal person	97	2	1
Confident	88	11	1
A good student	87	12	1
Ambitious	81	17	2
An optimist	66	29	5
Impatient	60	39	1
A religious person	53	45	2
An environmentalist	39	58	3
I'm going to read you a number of words and phrases that some people might use to describe themselves. For each one, please tell me whether you would use that word or phrase to describe yourself.			

TYPE OF SCHOOL ATTENDED	
	High School Students %
Boarding school	-
Public school	88
Private religious school	5
Private non-religious school	2
Taught by parents/home schooled	2
Charter school	1
Other	2
Not sure	-
What type of school do you attend? Is it a boarding school, public school, a private religious school, a private non-religious school, are you taught by your parents, or do you attend some other type of school?	

PARENTAL EDUCATION	
	High School Students %
Yes—Mother/stepmother has gone to college	21
Yes—Father/stepfather has gone to college	9
Both/all have gone to college	31
No, parents/stepparents have not gone to college	37
Not sure	2
Has either of your parents or stepparents gone to college? (IF "YES," ASK ) Which ones have gone to college?	

AREA TYPE	
	High School Students %
City	29
Suburb	25
Small town	29
Rural/farming area	15
Not sure	2
What is the best way to describe the area in which you live—a city, a suburb, a small town, or a rural area?	



PERCEIVED INCOME	
	High School Students %
Far below average	5
Slightly below average	20
Just about average	40
Slightly above average	27
Far above average	3
Not sure	5
Compared with other American families, would you say that your family's income is far below average, slightly below average, just about average, slightly above average, or far above average?	

RACE/ETHNICITY	
	High School Students %
Hispanic	19
White	54
Black	17
Asian	3
Other	6
Not sure	1
And finally, are you from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background? (IF "NO," ASK ) What is your race--white, black, Asian, or something else?	

# *Mission* OF THE HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

*To* induct as lifetime Members of the Association contemporary role models whose experiences exemplify that opportunities for a successful life are available to all individuals who are dedicated to the principles of integrity, hard work, perseverance, and compassion for others.

*To* provide scholarship assistance to deserving young people who have demonstrated integrity and determination in overcoming adversity in their lives and who have shown the academic potential and personal aspiration to make a unique contribution to society.

*To* mentor Association scholarship recipients and educate youth about the limitless possibilities that are available through the American free enterprise system, while underscoring the importance of service to others.

# HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION



**THE HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION OF DISTINGUISHED AMERICANS,** a non-profit organization, was founded in 1947 to combat a growing attitude among young people that economic opportunity was a thing of the past. The Association strives to motivate and educate our nation's young people about the economic and personal opportunities afforded them through the American free enterprise system.

The Association celebrates the “Horatio Alger heroes” of today by presenting Horatio Alger Awards, and it helps create the “heroes” of the future by granting more than \$12 million in college scholarships to deserving young people each year.

## MEMBERSHIP & AFFILIATES

**HORATIO ALGER MEMBERS:** The Horatio Alger Award and induction into the Association are conferred each year on usually ten Americans who have triumphed over adversity to achieve success in their respective fields. Consisting of more than 600 Horatio Alger Award recipients, the membership represents all walks of American life. Members have made outstanding contributions in the fields of science, medicine, business, entertainment, athletics, law, religion, education, and the arts. Members serve as role models to youth inspiring them by example and encouraging them through educational opportunities. Spouses of Members, known as **Life Partners**, also actively participate in the programs of the Association. In 2003, the Horatio Alger Association began presenting an **International Horatio Alger Award** each year to a citizen of another country who serves as a role model and embodies the ideals promoted by the Association. **Horatio Alger Friends of Distinction** are individuals, foundations, and corporations who are not Members of the Association but who become formally affiliated with and recognized by the Horatio Alger Association for their support of its mission and educational programs.

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

To inspire and encourage American youth along the path to success, Horatio Alger Members sponsor the following programs:

**HORATIO ALGER NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS:** Each year more than 100 students receive Horatio Alger National Scholarships val-

ued at \$20,000 each. Recipients have exhibited integrity, academic promise, and perseverance in overcoming personal adversity. National Scholarship recipients attend, as guests of the Association, the National Scholars Conference held annually in Washington, D.C., to learn about the federal government and the American free enterprise system through meetings with Association Members.

**HORATIO ALGER STATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS:** The Association has additional scholarship programs in individual states for high school seniors who will be attending college. Award amounts range from \$2,500 and \$10,500. The Association has scholarship programs in Alabama, California, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. Scholarship recipients have demonstrated strength of character in the face of adversity, academic potential, community involvement, and a desire for a college education. In 2009, the Association will award state scholarships in all of the 50 states.

**HORATIO ALGER MILITARY VETERANS SCHOLARSHIPS:** As an expression of appreciation, individual Members and friends sponsor \$5,000 scholarships to U.S. military veterans who participated in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan or Operation Iraqi Freedom. More than \$16 million has been raised in support of Horatio Alger scholarships to veterans.

**STATE OF OUR NATION'S YOUTH:** The Association regularly conducts a survey among American teenagers, ages 13–19, to learn about the people, institutions, and issues that are shaping their lives. Results are compiled in a report bearing the same name, which serves as a resource for educators and people concerned about the well-being of today's young people.

**HORATIO ALGER COLLEGIATE PARTNERS:** A premier network of colleges and universities from across the country works in partnership with the Association to provide special scholarship and financial aid opportunities for Horatio Alger Scholars who attend their schools.

**HORATIO ALGER INTERNSHIP AND PLACEMENT SERVICE:** Provides Horatio Alger Scholars with opportunities to gain practical work experience while attending college, with the possibility of permanent placement following graduation.

**HORATIO ALGER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:** The Alumni Association enables Horatio Alger scholarship recipients who have completed their studies to maintain contact with each other and to remain involved with the Association through Alumni conferences, a newsletter, mentoring programs and a variety of other activities. To further assist its Alumni, the Association annually awards the **Alumnus of the Year Award** to recognize an Alumnus who has excelled academically, professionally and in service to his or her community. To assist Alumni seeking graduate degrees, the Association awards Horatio Alger **Graduate Grants**. In 2006, it also implemented the **Dennis R. Washington Horatio Alger Graduate Fellowship Program** to support Scholars' advanced studies at the University of Montana; and in 2008 the first **Washington Family Horatio Alger Scholarship of Excellence Grants** were implemented to support the graduate and post-graduate studies of Scholars.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Horatio Alger Association shares information about its educational activities and mission with millions of Americans through video productions and publications.

**WEB SITE:** The Web site features information about the Association's mission, Members and scholarship activities. Among the many options featured on the site, viewers may obtain biographical information about Association Members, and students may apply for Horatio Alger scholarships online. ([www.horatioalger.com](http://www.horatioalger.com) or [www.horatioalger.org](http://www.horatioalger.org)).

## PUBLICATIONS

*Only in America Opportunity Still Knocks* annually announces the Horatio Alger Award recipients and National Scholarship recipients.

*Quotations: Success Secrets of Power Thinkers* is a collection of inspirational quotations and biographical information from the Members of the Horatio Alger Association.

*Ad Astra Per Aspera – To the Stars through Difficulties: A 60-Year History of the Horatio Alger Association* recounts the Association's development from its formation in 1947 to contemporary times.

*Horatio Alger: A Century of Covers and Illustrations* visually conveys Horatio Alger's themes through color reproductions of the covers and black and white illustrations from different editions of his books.

***Biennial Report 2007-2008*** details the Association's recent accomplishments and presents plans for future achievements.

***The Forum***, the Association's semiannual magazine, provides current information about Members, Association activities, and educational programs.

***An Investment in America's Future – Association Profile*** provides a broad overview of the Association, including information about its Members, educational programs, alumni activities, development, and public outreach.

***Blueprint for 2007 – 2010*** outlines concrete projects undertaken by the Association in support of its four long-range objectives.

***Strive and Succeed***, the Association's student newsletter, provides current information about the National Scholars, Association activities, and educational programs.

***A Commitment to Our Scholars*** documents ways the Association currently supports young people in addition to its scholarship programs and it outlines plans to increase assistance in the immediate future to foster lifelong relationships with its Scholars.

***Building a Legacy: Twenty-five Years of Achievement*** conveys the results of the 2006-2007 National Scholars Survey. Current and Alumni Scholars participated in the survey.

***Collegiate Partners Program*** describes the Collegiate Partners Program and provides interested schools with an agreement form.

***Risen from the Ranks: Horatio Alger Military Veterans Scholarships*** tells the personal stories of 20 veteran scholarship recipients, lists all the recipients through 2007; and the publication credits sponsors of Horatio Alger scholarships for veterans.

***Legacy of Achievement*** brochure provides detailed information about planned giving opportunities to support the Association's activities.

***State of Our Nation's Youth*** report conveys the results of the Association's annual national survey on the attitudes and beliefs of teenagers. This report is made available to the public in conjunction with an annual press conference.

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HORATIO  
ALGER  
ASSOCIATION

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